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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.
08/626,600	04/02/96	GUINN	107040.007

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EXAMINER
HUGHET, W

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
2761	

DATE MAILED: 05/27/98

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Office Action Summary

Application No.

08/626,600

Applicant(s)

Michael F. Quinn, et al.

Examiner

William N. Hugnet

Group Art Unit

2761

☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on Feb 27, 1998

☒ This action is **FINAL**.

☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, **prosecution as to the merits is closed** in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

A shortened statutory period for response to this action is set to expire 3 month(s), or thirty days, whichever is longer, from the mailing date of this communication. Failure to respond within the period for response will cause the application to become abandoned. (35 U.S.C. § 133). Extensions of time may be obtained under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a).

Disposition of Claims

☒ Claim(s) 1-12 and 14-32 is/are pending in the application.

Of the above, claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

☒ Claim(s) 1-12 and 14-32 is/are rejected.

☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

☐ Claims _____ are subject to restriction or election requirement.

Application Papers

☐ See the attached Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948.

☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are objected to by the Examiner.

☐ The proposed drawing correction, filed on _____ is ☐ approved ☐ disapproved.

☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d).

☐ All ☐ Some* ☐ None of the CERTIFIED copies of the priority documents have been
☐ received.

☐ received in Application No. (Series Code/Serial Number) _____.

☐ received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

*Certified copies not received: _____

☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).

Attachment(s)

☒ Notice of References Cited, PTO-892

☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s), PTO-1449, Paper No(s). _____

☐ Interview Summary, PTO-413

☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948

☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application, PTO-152

--- SEE OFFICE ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES ---

Part III DETAILED ACTION

Notice

1. Effective November 16, 1997, the Examiner handling this application was assigned to a new Art Unit as a result of the consolidation into Technology Center 2700. See the Official Gazette notice dated November 11, 1997. For any written or facsimile communication submitted ON OR AFTER November 16, 1997, this Examiner, who was assigned to Art Unit 2411, will be assigned to Art Unit 2761. Please include the new Art Unit in the caption or heading of any communication submitted after the November 16, 1997 date. Your cooperation in this matter will assist in the timely processing of the submission and is appreciated by the Office.

Status of Claims

2. Of the original Claims 1 - 20, Claim 13 has been canceled by Applicants' amendment filed February 27, 1998. The same amendment has added Claims 21 - 32. In addition, Claims 1 and 14 have been amended. Therefore, Claims 1 - 12 and 14 - 32 are under prosecution in this application.

Summary of this Office Action

3. In light of the amended and added claims, the Examiner was required to conduct another prior art search and has applied the newly discovered art to the claims.

4. Applicants' arguments filed February 27, 1998 have been fully considered, are discussed in the next section below or within the following rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103, and except as where expressly noted, are not deemed to be persuasive. Therefore,

- Claim 28 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112;
- Claims 1 - 12 and 14 - 32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as unpatentable over the art cited below; and

Applicants' request for allowance is respectfully denied.

Response to Applicants' Amendment

5. The Examiner acknowledges Applicants' amended title and therefore withdraws the prior office action's objection regarding this matter.
6. As regards Cukor being limited to a single processing station, the Examiner cites to Cukor at Col 5, lines 52 - 59; Col 6, lines 1 - 6; and Col 21, lines 42 - 45 as expressly teaching a plurality of processing stations.
7. As regards transaction folders bundling bit mapped images and messages into one folder, Cukor discloses such a feature at Col 7, lines 16 - 21 and Col 10, lines 22 - 40. As regards the content of the messages, no such limitation is claimed.
8. As regards local storage of transaction folders, Cukor discloses this feature at Fig 2 ("Transaction Data File 23"); Col 7, lines 39 - 44; and Col 10, lines 46 - 51.
9. Applicants' remaining traversals are discussed under the 35 U.S.C. § 103 rejection below.

Drawings

10. This application has been filed with informal drawings which are acceptable for examination purposes only. Formal drawings will be required when the application is allowed.

Specification

11. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

(A) The specification is objected to under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as not being written in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same. In particular, Claim 28 recites the limitation of providing user access to a local image file with the regional processing center is off-line. However, the Specification fails to disclose any such feature.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

12. Claim 28 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, for the reasons set forth in the objection to the specification.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

13. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. § 103 which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Subject matter developed by another person, which qualifies as prior art only under subsection (f) or (g) of section 102 of this title, shall not preclude patentability under this section where the subject matter and the claimed invention were, at the time the invention was made, owned by the same person or subject to an obligation of assignment to the same person.

14. Claims 1 - 12 and 14 - 32 are rejected under 35 USC § 103 as being unpatentable over Cukor et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,168,444) in view of Tom Reding, "Digital Imaging

Technology: What, Where, and Why in Commercial Nuclear Power", Nuclear Plant Journal, July-August 1991, pages 89, 90, and 94 (hereinafter "Reding").

(A) As to Claim 1 and 10 - 12, Cukor discloses a computer-based trade records information management system for scanning, storing, searching, retrieving, and displaying data pertaining to commercial transactions (see Cukor; abstract). A central storage means at one or more regional processing centers stores bit mapped (scanned) images of documents and includes a database of data related to the scanned documents (Fig. 1; Col 5, lines 31 - 59; Col 8, lines 4 - 7). Cukor teaches regional processing centers comprised of a plurality of customer workstations each located at shipping stations remote from a central storage facility. Each workstation includes local storage means for storing bit mapped images and all transaction-associated documents and information (Col 7, lines 16 - 21 and Col 10, lines 22 - 40) and is linked to central storage by means of a local area network. Although Cukor does not expressly disclose use of a wide area network for connecting the workstations to the regional center nor for linking regional centers to each other, it does teach that a plurality of such regional centers may be networked together over a large geographic area (Fig. 1; Col 5, line 31 - Col 6, line 10). Reding is a system for the electronic storage, management, and retrieval of all types of documents and teaches that such a system can be implemented across both local and wide area networks (Reding at page 89, column 1). Reding also teaches at page 89, column 2 that data may be stored in ASCII format. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of financial information management to modify Cukor with the wide area network means of Reding in order to provide for institution-wide storage and retrieval of documents (see Reding at page 90, col 3; Cukor at Col 5, lines 52 - 59).

Cukor also discloses means for inputting data into central storage from a plurality of remote workstations and also from central means (Col 5, lines 43 - 50; Col 7, lines 16 - 21; Col 8, lines 4 - 7, Col 10, lines 46 - 60).

Finally, Cukor teaches indexing data to be centrally stored by means of a common PRO number and electronically associating all documents related to a single transactions in a common electronic file folder for subsequent retrieval. Such indexed data includes at least one scanned document (Col 2, lines 7 - 21; Col 10, lines 21 - 40).

Although Cukor does not expressly disclose the management of information related to financial transactions, the Examiner asserts that the sale and shipment of goods is well known to comprise financial transactions (see Col 1, line 65 to Col 2, line 6; Col 6, lines 37 - 41). Cukor further discloses means for storing messages and completed inquiries (Col 14 - 27). Furthermore, Cukor teaches electronic association of all documents associated with a particular shipment transaction (Col 10, lines 22 - 40) and further discloses the processing of documents for filling customer requests (Col 7, lines 21 - 25). The Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of financial information management to include means for storing customer messages and inquiries. One would be motivated to do so in order to retain all information related to a particular transaction in a single, searchable database for subsequent review and/or retrieval and to avoid the problems associated with handling paper documents (see Col 2, lines 7 - 12 and 19 - 21; Col 3, lines 21 - 25 and 62 - 65; Col 5, lines 21 - 25).

(B) As to Claims 2 and 3, although Cukor discloses means for searching data storage means and identifying found records, it does not teach searching by means of structured inquiries (Col 8, line 65; Col 14, lines 11 - 18; Col 7, lines 21 - 25). Reding does teach searching the document image file by means of structured database queries and displaying the found records (page 89, col 2). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Cukor with the structured query means of Reding in order to utilize the sophisticated search means available through database management systems (see Reding at page 89, col 2). Although both Cukor and Reding disclose use of

display means by which to view found documents, neither teach such means by which to build structured queries. However, the Examiner asserts that the use of graphic user interfaces to build structured queries is well known in the art of database management and would have been obvious to the skilled artisan as a known and convenient means by which to search an online database.

(C) As to Claim 4, Cukor discloses supervisory means for monitoring activities on the system (Col 3, lines 31 - 34; Col 8, lines 48 - 49). Although Cukor does not disclose the details of the supervisory means, the Examiner asserts that monitoring the work of another, any backlog of processing, and assigning access privileges are all well known supervisory means and would have been obvious to the skilled artisan to implement to ensure timely and secure processing of financial data (see Col 3, lines 31 - 32 and 35 - 36).

(D) As to Claim 5, Cukor teaches accessing and displaying the data in a particular data folder (Col 14, lines 11 - 18; Col 7, lines 21 - 25).

(E) As to Claim 6, Cukor teaches assigning a transaction data folder to a particular user by name, PRO number, and/or bill of lading (Col 6, lines 49 - 60; Col 10, lines 22 - 40).

(F) As to Claim 7, Cukor discloses a work queue containing documents of a particular user to process (Col 7, lines 21 - 25).

(G) As to Claim 8, Cukor teaches means for exchanging database data through the network (Col 7, lines 16 - 25).

(H) As to Claim 9, Cukor teaches assignment of a unique internal identifier for the identification of each file folder and further to identify each document image in the folder (Col 14, lines 8 - 26; Col 15, lines 2 - 8).

(I) As to Claim 14, Cukor teaches preprocessing of inbound paper-based documents at the remote site prior to transmission to the central site (Col 10, lines 22 -

60). The remaining limitations of Claim 14 are found in Claim 1, and the remainder of this claim is rejected for the same reasons.

(J) The limitations of Claim 15 are found in Claim 6, and this claim is rejected for the same reasons.

(K) The limitations of Claim 16 are found in Claim 7, and this claim is rejected for the same reasons.

(L) The limitations of Claim 17 are found in Claim 4, and this claim is rejected for the same reasons.

(M) The limitations of Claim 18 are found in Claim 1, and this claim is rejected for the same reasons.

(N) The limitations of Claim 19 are found in Claim 2, and this claim is rejected for the same reasons.

(O) The limitations of Claim 20 are found in Claim 9, and this claim is rejected for the same reasons.

(P) The limitations of Claim 21 are found in Claim 1, and this claim is rejected for the same reasons.

(Q) As to Claim 22, Cukor discloses at Col 3, lines 48 - 64 converting image data to and from a stored image format.

(R) As to Claim 23, Cukor discloses scanning documents into local storage for transmission to a regional processing center, with subsequent retrieval from the regional site by the local service unit (Col 3, lines 49 - 50; Col 7, lines 16 - 18 and 23 - 24). The images can also be retrieved from local storage (Col 11, lines 11 - 12). The images are indexed locally (Col 6, lines 33 - 43 and 52 - 60). The transaction folder containing the images is stored locally and at the regional processing center (Col 11, lines 3 - 8). The remaining limitations of Claim 23 are found in Claim 1, and the remainder of this claim is rejected for the same reasons.

(S) As to Claim 24, Cukor's system provides for data input at local workstations (Col 10, lines 23 - 40).

(T) The limitations of Claim 25 are found in Claim 23, and this claim is rejected for the same reasons.

(U) As to Claim 27, Cukor discloses at Col 6, lines 23 - 29 the receipt and storage of inbound fax messages.

(V) As to Claims 28 and 29, Cukor teaches user access to locally and regionally stored documents (Fig 1; Col 29, lines 53 - 57; Col 7, lines 16 - 25). Cukor further discloses local access to the transaction file when the regional center is unavailable (Col 11, lines 1 - 8), regardless of why the regional center fails to respond.

(W) As to Claim 32, Cukor discloses communications between regional processing centers for distributed image processing, including the retrieval of images from transaction folders (Col 5, lines 43 - 59; Col 21, lines 42 - 45; Col 25, lines 40 - 44).

15. Claims 26 and 30 are rejected under 35 USC § 103 as being unpatentable over Cukor and Reding as applied to Claims 1 and 23 above, and further in view of Wang et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,490,217).

(A) As per Claims 26 and 30 and as discussed above regarding Claims 1 and 23, Cukor discloses a computer-based trade records information management system for scanning, storing, searching, retrieving, and displaying data pertaining to commercial transactions across a network of local and regional stations. Although Cukor discloses the creation of transaction folders related to financial transactions, it does not expressly teach adding images to an existing folder nor transferring images between folders. Wang is an automatic document handling system in which documents are scanned into storage for archiving and subsequent retrieval (Wang at abstract; Col 2, lines 40 - 46). Wang teaches that images can be added to existing folders (Col 5, line 49 - 52) and may be moved from one folder to another (Col 6, lines 27 - 31).

16. Claim 31 is rejected under 35 USC § 103 as being unpatentable over Cukor and Reding as applied to Claims 1 and 23 above, and further in view of Joe Dysart, "A Shortcut in the Paper Chase", Distributing, v 93, n 1, pages 42 - 44, January 1994 (hereinafter "Dysart").

(A) As to Claim 31, and as discussed above regarding Claims 1 and 23, Cukor discloses a computer-based trade records information management system for scanning, storing, searching, retrieving, and displaying data pertaining to commercial transactions across a network of local and regional stations. Although Cukor discloses local storage into transaction folders during the day (Col 6, lines 43 - 48), it does not expressly teach that images are uploaded to the regional centers at night. Dysart teaches the graphical imaging of financial documents across a network in which the scanned images are transferred electronically to regional processing centers at night (Dysart at page 2, lines 3 - 7). The motivation to combine Dysart with the teachings of Cukor would be to take advantage of the well-known lower rates and lower traffic associated with nightly electronic transmissions of data.

Conclusion

17. Applicants' amendment necessitated new grounds of rejection. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. Applicants are reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a).

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR RESPONSE TO THIS FINAL ACTION IS SET TO EXPIRE THREE MONTHS FROM THE DATE OF THIS ACTION. IN THE EVENT A FIRST RESPONSE IS FILED WITHIN TWO MONTHS OF THE MAILING DATE OF THIS FINAL ACTION AND THE ADVISORY ACTION IS NOT MAILED UNTIL AFTER THE END OF THE THREE-MONTH SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD, THEN THE SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD WILL EXPIRE ON THE DATE THE ADVISORY ACTION IS MAILED, AND ANY EXTENSION FEE PURSUANT TO 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) WILL BE CALCULATED FROM THE MAILING

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DATE OF THE ADVISORY ACTION. IN NO EVENT WILL THE
STATUTORY PERIOD FOR RESPONSE EXPIRE LATER THAN SIX
MONTHS FROM THE DATE OF THIS FINAL ACTION.

18. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to William Hughet, whose telephone number is (703) 305-9770. The examiner can be reached on Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Gail Hayes, can be reached at (703) 305-9711. The fax phone number for this Group is (703) 305-9731.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 305-3900.

William N. Hughet
May 24, 1998
(08626600.AC2) *WNH*


ROBERT A. WEINHARDT
PRIMARY EXAMINER